The Builder.

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THE Railway is the marvel of our day. The rise and progress of the system within our own memory, its present position, surprising results, and probable effects on society all over the world, cannot be paralleled, and offer matter for consideration of paramount and increasing importance. How, from a laughed-at idea, the possibility of applying steam as a moving power became an established fact, and the means of using it were changed and improved by succeeding minds, is, indeed, a wonderful story, almost passing belief, and which cannot be read without advantage. Sir John Barrow, in his "Autobiography," quotes a letter from Madam Marion de l'Orme to her husband, the Marquis de Cinq Mars, which, if genuine, will give us a touching illustration of one part of this progress. The lady had been doing the honours of Paris to the Marquis of Worcester, of inventive memory:—

"We went to the Bicêtre," she writes, "where he pretends to have discovered in a madman a man of genius. Had he not been raving, I verily believe your marquis would have asked his liberty, to take him to London. In crossing the court where mad people are kept, more dead than alive from fear, I observed, on the other side of a strong barrier, an ugly face, screaming out, 'I am not mad! I have made a discovery that would enrich the country that should carry it into effect.' 'And what is his discovery?' I asked the keeper. 'Ah!' said he, 'you would never guess: it is the vapour of boiling water. His name,' continued he, 'is Salomon de Caus. He came from Normandy, four years ago, to present a memorial to the king, of the wonderful effect of steam for turning machinery, driving carriages, and a thousand other wonderful things; but the cardinal *drove him away without listening to him.* From that time he has pursued the cardinal wherever he went, so that he ordered him to be shut up in the Bicêtre as a madman, where he has been three years and a half. He has written a book on his wonderful discovery, which I have here.' Lord Worcester is ravished with it; and, after reading a few pages, 'This person,' said he, 'is no madman, and in my country, instead of shutting him up, they would heap riches upon him. (?) Bring me to him, I wish to question him.' He was taken to him, and returned sorrowful and pensive. 'At present,' he said, 'he is very mad. Misfortune and captivity have for ever estranged his reason. You have made him mad; but when you threw him into this prison, you there buried the greatest genius of your age.'"

Let this be genuine or not (and we are unwilling at once to divest the marquis of all credit for the discovery he claims for himself in his "Century of Inventions,") it gives a truth-like picture of a man before his age, possessed by the one idea which none would then regard. The fore-seer of steam in its usefulness, in the beginning of the 17th century, was imprisoned and made insane. The idea was realised, but succeeding prophets met with little better reception. And when in our own century, only a score of years ago, Thomas Gray, a crotchetty enthusiast, as his best friends called him, suggested that a general system of iron railways might be and ought to be laid down, whereon locomotives should run, and devoted his whole mind and heart to making clear the practicability of the scheme and the great advantages that would result to the nation from it, a leading review merely expressed the general opinion when it said, that "Gray was a madman, and ought to be put into Bedlam."*

The system has grown and grown. From most small beginning has come a mighty ending; which after all by the way, is but the ending of the beginning, much more being to follow. The snail took up the thread, the thread raised the whipcord, and the whipcord pulled up a rope strong enough to do all that was needed.† The course is now smooth, and English coal and iron, worked with English energy, are bringing the ends of the world into close and profitable connection. Thousands of miles of rail have been laid in the old world and the new, and the Iron-horse rushes on through mountain and through valley, over morass and over city, dispensing knowledge in the Saxon tongue, and forming a chain of civilization never to be broken.

"It matters not," says the remarkable Elihu Burritt, "where he is stabled or harnessed for his mission—whether to thunder through Siberian wastes with a ukase of Nicholas; or from Cairo to Timbuctoo, with a message from Ibrahim Pacha; or from Thibet to Calcutta, on a commercial errand—he will shew his Saxon pedigree, and his Saxon groom and rider. Where he goes, there will go the English language, and the genius of the English race. From the far, still, depths of Central Asia he will bring, Londonward, letters in the English tongue—letters to English churches—and then to English manufacturers and bankers;—and then new furnaces and forges will illumine the hills of Wales with their midnight glow—and the tall factory-chimneys of Lancashire and Yorkshire will thicken to a forest—and labyrinths of busy, bee-winged machinery will be added to the looms and spindles plying now. And the iron horse will shake the sombre solitudes of barbarism with his giant tread, and call strange tribes of men to come out of their dens, and caves, and forest lairs, into the sunlight and sympathy of civilisation, and to change their beast or bird-skin garments for those of fine-spun wool, or cotton. And at every place where he halts for fuel-food, he will leave a Christian missionary, and teachers of the English tongue; and returning, he will bring in his saddle-bags more letters for Bibles, and for bales of cloth and clothing:—the irresistible genius and the propagation of the English race are fast Anglicizing the world."

In England, railways are working changes not calculable; old powers are being destroyed and new ones created; the landed interest pales before the railroad interest, and corporations have been created with a patronage equal to that dispensed by the Government; new classes of men have been formed, and new towns are being built.

Railroads have not done for architecture what might reasonably have been expected. The architects were shelved by the engineers in the first instance, and having once got them down, they have carefully kept them there. Taste has been for the most part neglected, and in too many instances convenience also; it is to be hoped, however, as alterations become necessary, and they are becoming more so every day, that a different system will be pursued, and that art will be brought in to add its advantages to science. There are several points on which it behoves us to speak and to continue speaking. The design and arrangement of stations, the necessity of the greatest care and skill in constructions involving the safety of hundreds, proper provision for the hordes of men occupied in the formation of lines, are all matters in which we have the greatest interest, and to which we shall take an early opportunity of referring technically.

We are amongst those who would cheer on the iron horse with hearty zeal, and at the same time would inquire if his road could be improved and his course made even more universally beneficial than it is.*

STYLE IN ARCHITECTURE.

PRESENT STATE OF STYLE ACCOUNTED FOR—EXCELLENCE IN ARCHITECTURE ANCIENTLY UNITY OF STYLE.

To inquire into the origin of styles of architecture; to trace their development and declension; to discover in their examples evidences of the habits, state of education, and opinions of nations of whom no other records may survive, is a field for investigation, affording materials for history, of which the richness has been reserved for discovery in our own days. Former ages have been distinguished for their cultivation of art; have left works of which we seek only to catch the reflection; history has borne the impress of only the least important features in the progress of nations, and the historian has compiled from documents and archives, the narration of changes of kingdoms and governments. Imperial rule, ecclesiastical supremacy, contention between nations, anarchy in republics, the vices and the virtues of individual rulers, and all that belongs to the picturesque and the dramatic of history, have been sent along the stream of time by the labours of careful chroniclers. But, those conditions of society, which it should be the chief object of the historian to elucidate, could be examined to no adequate extent without such a minute knowledge of the changes and progress of architecture, which reflect the thoughts and the manners of past generations, as can hardly be anticipated by those who have not entered deeply into the study of the history of the art.—Such knowledge it has been reserved mainly for this epoch to attain; for though at no preceding period in the history of art, has there been any parallel with the present state of style in architecture, certainly at no preceding period has the knowledge of previously existing styles been so accurate. During the days of the empire, the Romans knew something both of Egyptian and of Greek art; but, though they employed foreign artists, as a nation they do not seem to have investigated the peculiari-

* In 1825, the *Quarterly Review*, too, thus ridiculed the notions of certain engineers—Telford amongst the number—that a railway engine could go eighteen or twenty miles an hour:—"The gross exaggeration of the powers of the locomotive steam-engine will, we speak English, the steam-carriage may delude for a time, but must end in the mortification of those concerned. * * * We should be sorry indeed to expend the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve's fireworks as apart themselves for the journey upon such a machine, going at such a rate." In that year, the common belief was, that railways were altogether delusions and impositions. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opposed in Parliament with every form of invective. One member, in 1825, declared his opinion "that a railway could not enter into successful competition with a canal. Even with the best locomotive engine, the average rate would be but three-and-a-half miles per hour, which was slower than the canal conveyance." "Let us be just," says Knight, "to what we have been accustomed to decry as the right hon. Let us be tolerant to those who imprisoned Galileo, and rewarded Columbus with chains. Where be a reality in any discovery—a true thing, and not a sham—if there be strength, or utility, or beauty, in any work of mind—it will live and flourish, whatever critics, or orators, or inquisitors, or even kings, may do to crush it. And so it is with railways."

† The story referred to was given by the *Quarterly* from Lockman, and it tells of a vizier, who, having offended his master, was condemned to perpetual captivity in a lofty tower. At night his wife came to weep below his window. "Cease your grief," said the sage, "go home for the present, and return hither when you have procured a live black beetle, together with a little *glue* (or bullock's leather), three skeins, one of the finest silk, another of stout pack-thread, and another of whip-cord; finally a stout coil of rope." When she again came to the foot of the tower, provided according to her husband's commands, he directed her to touch the head of the insect with a little of the *glue*, to tie one end of the silk thread around him, and to place the reptile on the wall of the tower. Seduced by the smell of the butter, which he conceived to lie in store somewhere above him, the beetle continued to ascend till he reached the top, and thus put the sister in possession of the end of the silk thread. Then he drew up the pack-thread by means of the silk, the small cord by means of the pack-thread, and by means of the cord, a stout rope capable of sustaining his own weight,—and so at last escaped from the place of durance. Great results may follow small beginnings.

* Reports of failures still reach us. We have before us letters of the fall of a portion of the tunnel on the Liverpool and Bury line, shortly after the erection of a 30-feet length had been effected. The earth followed, and lay fifteen feet deep on the floor of the excavation.

The formation of a "Railway Club" is again being agitated, and a meeting has been held, at which a committee was appointed to carry out the intention of the founders.

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